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DATE: 11/14/83
REPLY TO: POL - Tony Allitto
ATTN OF:
SUBJECT: ARA/SC Office Director Robert Morley's Talks With Human Rights Leaders in Buenos Aires
TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION BELOW

With Deputy-elect Augusto Conte and CELS (Center for Legal and Social Studies) President Emilio Mignone, in CELS headquarters on November 10

Conte (a Christian Democrat) made the following points:

- He believes he will have support from Radicals and Peronists for his idea of a bicameral Congressional commission empowered to investigate human rights cases.
- He claimed that a Christian Democratic leader had obtained Radical support for the idea from President-elect Alfonsin on November 9.
- Mignone (a Peronist) added that the Peronists would not oppose such an idea after their recent electoral debacle.
- The amnesty and antiterrorist laws of September will be repealed and will have no effect.
- The current Supreme Court will not make any decisions concerning those two laws.
- All judges will be replaced by the new government, including such well-known judges as Salvi and Dibur. Both Conte and Mignone noted that such wholesale replacements were traditional in Argentina when a new government takes office.
- Commenting on Alfonsin's team, Conte said that Defense Minister-designate Raul Borrás was reportedly the smartest of the group.

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5010-112

9523 78/293

-- Both Conte and Mignone agreed that, in their view, the Argentine armed forces are as defeated as the German armed forces after World War II; now is the time to subordinate the military to the Constitution and civilian government; if it can't be done now, it never will be; the U.S. needs to understand how little power and influence the Argentine armed forces will have with Alfonsin's government.

-- On foreign affairs issues, Conte mentioned only one - the foreign debt. He said the U.S. has got to help Argentina because Argentina simply cannot repay its foreign debt. He said the politicians have been lying to the people by telling them that Argentina has the capacity to repay all its foreign debt; it does not. Conte fears that this issue, if unresolved, could produce the social upheaval in Argentina that could undermine the new democracy, in which case the Southern Cone would become today's Caribbean within three years.

With Moises Camji, Vice President of the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (DAIA) in DAIA headquarters on November 11:

Camji made the following points:

-- The DAIA is much more optimistic now concerning the future of Argentina and its Jewish community because of the election results; a functioning democracy is the best guarantee of human rights - for all, not just for Jews.

-- The DAIA met with all major politicians during the campaign, including Alfonsin, who is for human rights and good relations with Israel.

-- There will be Argentine Jews holding elective office: Adolfo Gass will ~~be~~ probably be a Radical senator from Buenos Aires province; there will be at least four national deputies; there will be more Jewish officials in the provincial and municipal governments.

-- He sees more interest in politics among younger Jews.

-- He estimates the community population now at about 400,000.

-- The DAIA maintains close coordination with other human rights groups. For example, DAIA leaders will meet with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo on November 14 to dis-

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cuss how to handle the issue of missing persons (the "disappeared") with the new government.

With the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in the Mothers' headquarters on November 11:

Mrs. Carmen Lapaco and six other Mothers made the following points:

-- Their program will not change even though they will support the new civilian government; they will continue to call for the reappearance alive of the missing persons that the Mothers claim are still being held somewhere in Argentina, an explanation of what happened to those who died, a naming of those who caused the deaths, and trials for those individuals.

-- The Mothers will have a three-track approach:

1. They will continue to demonstrate every Thursday in the Plaza de Mayo, but will also demonstrate elsewhere - such as in front of the Congress building.

2. They will lobby Congress, primarily through Deputy Conte.

3. They will bring cases in court to force the Judicial Branch to address this issue.

-- When the Mothers met with Radical party leaders Adolfo Gass and Horacio Ravenna on November 1, Ravenna reportedly told the Mothers that a bicameral Congressional commission to investigate human rights was all right with the Radicals; Gass, however, told the press right after the meeting that the Radicals wanted to leave this issue to the courts.

-- The USG should support the new civilian government, not the Argentine armed forces.

Radical

With ^ Deputies-elect Dr. Juan Manuel Casella and Dr. Guillermo Tello Rosas, in the Charge's Residence on November 11:

-- Both Casella and Tello Rosas said there would be no bicameral Congressional "investigatory" commission. Instead, there would be a bicameral Congressional human rights commission to study how to protect human rights in the future, not to investigate the past, which would

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be left to the courts.

-- Tello Rosas also said the USG had to help Argentina to restructure its debt repayments.

-- Casella was interested in receiving U.S. literature on the subject of the subordination of the American military to civilian authority. Chargé Bushnell said that Office Director Morley would have something sent from Washington and that our USIS people here would also check to see what they have.

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